

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 03940 181730Z

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 /053 W

----- 104287

R 181617Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 105

INFO USNATO 2574

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 3940

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, IT

SUBJECT: CENTER-LEFT SUMMIT PASSES LAW AND ORDER HOT POTATO
TO GOVERNMENT

REF: ROME 3530, 3415

SUMMARY: MARCH 17 CENTER-LEFT PARTY SUMMIT ASKED MORO GOVERNMENT
TO DRAFT COMPROMISE LAW AND ORDER LEGISLATION FOR CONSIDERATION
AT FOLLOW-UP FOUR-PARTY SUMMIT EARLY NEXT WEEK. YESTERDAY'S
MEETING ALSO DEVELOPED GENERAL AGREEMENT TO HOLD SCHEDULED
REGIONAL ELECTIONS SECOND OR THIRD SUNDAY IN JUNE AND TO ENABLE
NEWLY ENFRANCHISED 18-YEAR-OLD VOTERS TO GET ON VOTING ROLLS BY
THAT TIME. END SUMMARY.

1. FOUR CENTER-LEFT PARTIES HELD LONG DELAYED AND POTENTIALLY
EXPLOSIVE SUMMIT MEETING MARCH 17 TO ATTEMPT TO RECONCILE
DIVERGENT VIEWS ON LAW AND ORDER LEGISLATION. ALTHOUGH
ATMOSPHERE OF MEETING WAS CALM, FOUR PARTIES INVOLVED
(CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, SOCIALISTS, SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND
REPUBLICANS) SUBSTANTIALLY RESTATED ALREADY PUBLICIZED PARTY
POSITIONS ON WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE IN LAW AND ORDER FIELD.
ALTHOUGH MAJOR DIFFERENCES REMAIN BETWEEN SOCIALISTS (PSI) AND
POSITION OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (DC) AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (PSDI)
ON QUESTION OF POLICE UNIONIZATION, AND LEGISLATION TO PERMIT
WIDER POLICE POWERS TO DETAIN ON SUSPICION AND USE FIREARMS IN
SELF-DEFENSE, SUFFICIENT OVERLAP OF VIEWS APPEARS TO EXIST TO
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PAGE 02 ROME 03940 181730Z

PERMIT EVENTUAL COMPROMISE. MORO GOVERNMENT GIVEN TASK BY

SUMMIT OF DRAFTING SUCH COMPROMISE LEGISLATION TO BE CONSIDERED BY CENTER-LEFT PARTIES EARLY NEXT WEEK.

2. SUMMIT ALSO DISCUSSED SETTING DATE FOR SCHEDULED REGIONAL ELECTIONS. CONSENSUS REPORTEDLY EMERGED IN FAVOR OF SECOND OR THIRD SUNDAY IN JUNE, WITH FINAL CHOICE LEFT UP TO MORO GOVERNMENT. IN ADDITION, INTERIOR MINISTER CALLED ON PARLIAMENT TO APPROVE LAW ENABLING NEWLY ENFRANCHISED 18-YEAR-OLD VOTERS TO BE ENTERED ON ELECTORAL LISTS IN TIME FOR JUNE ELECTIONS AND FOR SUPPLEMENTARY LEGISLATION TO ENABLE THEM ALSO TO BE CANDIDATES FOR REGIONAL OFFICE.

3. COMMENT. SUMMIT RESULT CONFIRMED UNWILLINGNESS OF ANY OF CENTER-LEFT PARTIES TO RISK ONUS OF PULLING DOWN MORO GOVERNMENT BECAUSE OF FAILURE TO RESOLVE CONFLICTING VIEWS ON LAW AND ORDER. BY TURNING OVER THIS THORNY ISSUE TO MASTER MEDIATOR LIKE MORO, PARTIES WILL HAVE TO CONTENT THEMSELVES WITH COMPROMISE AT LOWEST COMMON DENOMINATOR. THIS WILL PROBABLY INVOLVE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE ECONOMIC, PROFESSIONAL AND LEGAL POSITION OF THE POLICE, A SOMEWHAT TOUGHER ATTITUDE TOWARD COMMON CRIMINALITY AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE FROM RIGHT OR LEFT AND MORE RESTRICTIVE USE OF "PROVISIONAL LIBERTY" FOR DANGEROUS OFFENDERS. THE COMPROMISE IS LIKELY TO LEAVE WIDE SCOPE TO THE PARTIES TO CONTINUE TO ADVOCATE THEIR INDIVIDUAL VIEWS ON THIS MAJOR ELECTORAL ISSUE. VOLPE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL PARTIES, ELECTION CANDIDATES, PARTY LINES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ROME03940
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750095-0377
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750340/aaaabjvp.tel
Line Count: 86
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 ROME 3530, 75 3415
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28 APR 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <23 SEP 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CENTER-LEFT SUMMIT PASSES LAW AND ORDER HOT POTATO TO GOVERNMENT
TAGS: PINT, PINS, IT
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006